



10 Things You Must Pack for Your Safari

1. Passport, Itinerary, Travel Insurance Docs & E-tickets

It seems obvious, but we would be remiss if we didn't put this at the top of the list of what you must pack for your safari.

2. Prescription Meds

Remember to put your prescription medications in your hand luggage (in case your check-in bag goes astray... it happens!) ...and make sure you have enough of each type to last your entire safari.

3. Prescription Glasses (Sunglasses, Hat, Sunblock Et Al)

If you wear prescription glasses, be sure to pack more than one set (in case you lose one or they get broken). You will be outdoors for much of the time, so be prepared. Pack a hat, sunblock, long sleeves, and lip balm.

4. Camera, Video and Binoculars

Whilst most people will remember to take their camera and/or video (or will use their mobile phone), not everyone thinks they need to take binoculars! Binoculars are ESSENTIAL for optimum wildlife viewing on safari (and a GOOD pair of binoculars will make a BIG difference to your safari). We strongly recommend a pair of binoculars on safari. Get the most expensive you can afford (at least 8x42 or better still 10x42 magnification).

Africa is a photographer's dream. Not only does the boundless wildlife come in all shapes and sizes, but the continent is also blessed with stunning landscapes, colorful people and fabulous light! Don't miss out. Buy a camera, if you don't already have one.

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5. Clothes & Toiletries

Of course you're not going to forget clothes! But are you taking the right clothes...and are you within those weight restrictions your travel agent told you about for those light aircraft flights? Most international airlines will restrict your check-in luggage to around 20 to 30kgs (55lbs). However, if your safari itinerary includes any light aircraft flights, then this can mean as little as 12 to 15 kgs (sometimes including your hand luggage!).

Don't panic! Remember, a same-day laundry service is usually available in most safari camps and lodges. This means you DO NOT need a change of clothes because each day you are on safari! The exception will be for mobile-tented safaris where it is often difficult, due to the mobile nature, to offer a laundry service. It may also be possible to leave a bag with the charter company, or person to meet you, for the duration of the safari portion. When in doubt, ask your travel agent.

Casual but Comfortable

Casual, comfortable clothing is suitable throughout the year when on safari. Whilst you may elect to start a completely new safari 'wardrobe' it is not necessary to look like an extra on the set of Out of Africa! Apart from selecting reasonably neutral or 'non-bright' colored clothing, safari-wear is generally casual and practical. Be sure you take clothes that you feel comfortable in – especially when it comes to your walking/hiking boots. The newer quick-drying fabrics, shirts with ventilation and trousers that convert into shorts are all worth considering.

Layering Is Key

Wearing clothes in layers is the most practical way to cope with fluctuating day/night temperatures and cool evenings whilst on safari. As the day warms up you can peel off another layer. Then as it begins to cool in the evening, you can put them back on.

Here's the "must-haves" to pack for your safari:

- A) T-shirt, shirt or blouse - long sleeves and collars help to protect yourself from the sun and mosquitoes
- B) Fleece or warm jacket
- C) A pair of safari trousers - those that zip off at the knees are very handy, too
- D) Comfortable walking shoes (or boots) and socks
- E) Hat
- F) Bandanna or cotton scarf and a sarong
- G) Maybe a pair of open sports sandals for general daytime use in warmer months
- H) Swimsuit - several lodges and camps have swimming pools

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I) An elegantly casual outfit for dinner at the smarter hotels

J) A light, compact raincoat, if it is likely, you will encounter rain (gorilla and chimp trekking)

K) And, of course, your undergarments

Dull and/or neutral colors are more suitable for safari, white and/or bright colors are not practical as they tend to stand out – not advisable on a walking safari. Cotton clothing is recommended although the newer synthetic safari clothing lines are quick drying and extremely comfortable.

Check the Weather

Ask me (or check online) and find out what the weather will be like where you are going. You may not need any serious cold weather gear at all (and that will really help with the luggage limit!). Alternatively, if you are going anywhere in winter where the temperature drops dramatically when the sun goes down, you may need gloves, a scarf, a thick jacket and a beanie! Place like Ngorongoro are freezing in the early morning and late evening during the winter months (June through August). And this is magnified by a significant wind-chill factor that you'll feel when on the back of an open game-drive vehicle.

6. Phone, Music, Tablet or Laptop

What you must pack for your safari are your phone, music, tablet or laptop - and their respective chargers, country-specific adaptor plugs.

7. Preventative Pharmaceuticals

This is just a fancy way of saying 'meds' – stuff you need, just in case the worst happens: diarrhea, headaches, heartburn, insect repellent, hand sanitizer, bites (antihistamine), indigestion, sore throat (lozenges), eye drops, and most important – anti-malarial tablets.

8. Odds & Ends

A good torch (flashlight) is a must. It can be pitch black in the bush or in your tent in the middle of the night. A rechargeable torch is ideal, but a small battery-powered torch is sufficient. The new LED miner lights that fit your head (and leave your hands free) are also a good option. A smaller (pencil) torch for emergencies or looking at star maps

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is also worth considering. Most camps will provide a torch or will walk you back to your tent as required, but being self-sufficient is always a good idea.

A good book. It never hurts to have an interesting book when travelling. You never know when you are going to be delayed at the airport or fall victim to Africa time! A travel diary or journal is something we recommend. You will see and experience so much in such a short period of time on safari that the only way to maintain a good record of it will be to write it down. It does require discipline but will serve as an invaluable record of your safari adventure.

9. Hand Luggage

Firstly, try to restrict your hand luggage to one item only, if for no other reason than more than one item makes travel that much harder. And, yes, a handbag qualifies as a second item! Obviously, that one item should be of a size that is acceptable as carry-on luggage by the airline. If you are a photographer, then this will mean you must have sufficient space in your camera bag for travel documents, your prescription medication and/or glasses, binoculars and even a change of clothes. Bear in mind that restrictions on what can and cannot be taken on board an aircraft are still in place – including for liquids, flammables and sharp objects. The rules change frequently, so please double-check and take heed.

10. Finally, Don't Forget Your Sense of Humor, Patience and Some Common Sense!

It is not advisable to wear any form of clothing that may be construed as “camouflage”. By this we mean any form of brown/green “combat” style coloring. Even if it is the latest fashion statement – and even if it is your 14-year-old wearing it – and even if it is just a cap. Many African authorities have a disproportionate phobia about such garments, and this could conceivably result in you being questioned or harassed by the police. It has the potential to cause you grief, so don't do it. Do not take any expensive personal jewelry on safari. Be minimalist or take only those everyday items that you normally wear, like your wedding band, inexpensive earrings.

Regarding securing your luggage, we would strongly suggest using one or more combination locks to secure zips together if your suitcase does not have its own locking mechanism. Luggage tampering in airports does occur, unfortunately. Luggage straps that wrap around your suitcase can also deter, whilst shrink-wrapping facilities are available at some airports.

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